

Culturally & Linguistically Sustaining Practices in Lowell Public Schools

Update
February 25, 2022



Equity. Excellence. Empowerment.

Agenda

1. Review of core beliefs and fundamental commitments
2. Overview of Demographic Data
3. Review of Key Student Data
4. Defining Culturally Responsive and Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices
5. Update on the 2021-22 Strategic Goals as relates to Culturally Responsive and Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices

Core Beliefs

- A high-quality education is a fundamental civil right of every child.
- Teaching and Learning is the core of our work.
- Families are students' first teachers.
- Sustainable school improvement requires hard and steady work over time.
- Every adult in the system is accountable for the success of all students; the entire community is responsible for their success.

Fundamental Commitments

- Eliminate the racial, ethnic and linguistic achievement and opportunity gaps among all students.
- Provide equitable funding and resources among the district's diverse schools.
- Engage all families with courtesy, dignity, respect and cultural understanding.

Lowell Public Schools Demographics

District Type

Public

Number of Schools

27

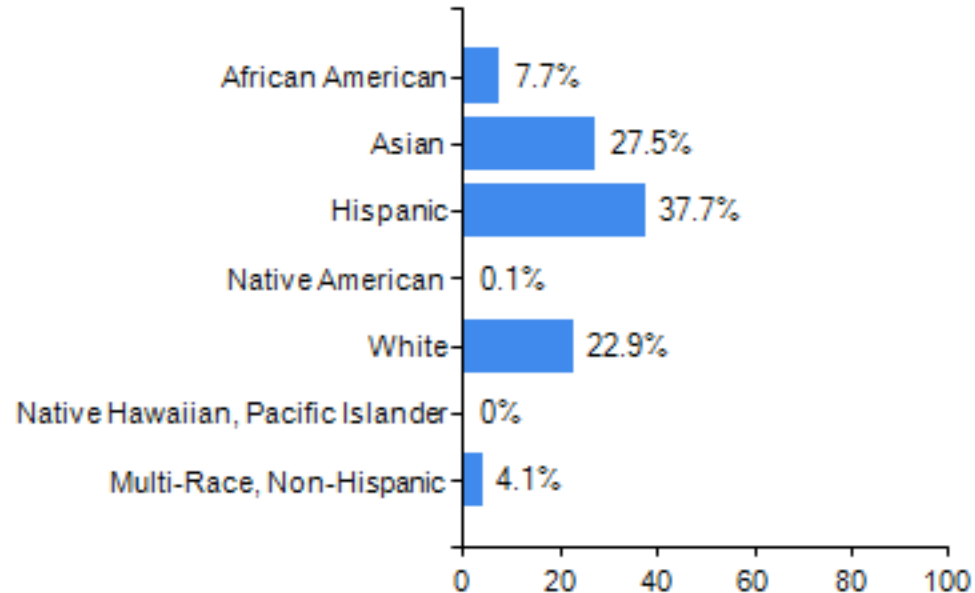
Enrollment

13,991

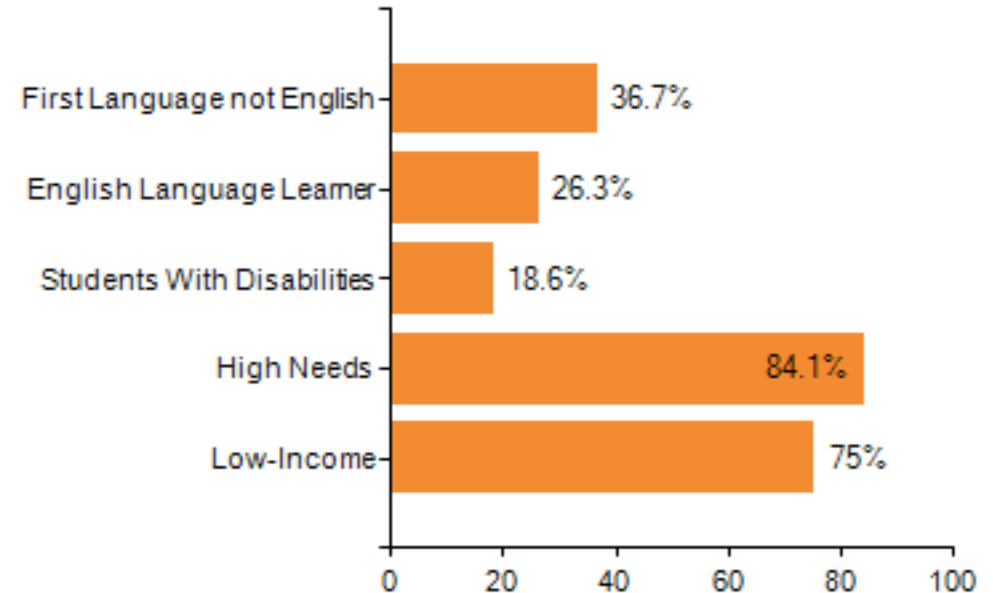
Grades Served

PK - 12

Student Race and Ethnicity



Selected Populations



Lowell Public Schools Staff Demographics

Staffing Data by Race, Ethnicity, Gender by Full-time Equivalents (2020-21)

	District	State
African American	39.0	6,273.5
Asian	86.0	2,291.3
Hispanic	129.5	6,734.3
White	1,664.4	120,120.9
Native American	2.0	133.6
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0.5	79.4
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	9.0	716.7
Males	373.4	27,782.9
Females	1,557.0	108,536.1
FTE Count	1,930.4	136,349.7

Lowell Public Schools Select Data from FY21

	DISTRICT ENROLLMENT	GRADUATION RATE	DROP OUT RATE	MASS CORE COMPLETION	IN SCHOOL SUSPENSION	OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION	ATTENDANCE	CHRONICALLY ABSENT	STUDENT RETENTION	PASSING ALL GRADE 9 COURSES	ATTENDING HIGHER ED POST GRADUATION
ASIAN	27.5	90.9	0.8	21.3	0.0	0.1	95.4	12.0	1.8	62.9	60.5
BLACK	7.7	79.3	2.0	12.2	0.00	0.7	93.7	19.7	2.8	45.1	63.2
HISPANIC	37.7	68	4.7	6.8	0.2	0.9	89.6	32.8	3.6	31.7	35.3
WHITE	22.9	80.8	3.1	19.6	0.1	0.6	92.4	22.4	2.5	53.9	66.7
MULTIRACIAL	4.1	77.4	.8	25	0.2	1.0	92.6	20.5	2.4	41.2	61.1
ALL		80	2.7	16.4	0.1	0.6	92.4	23	2.8	46.1	56.4

EL	26.3	69.6	6	8.4	0.0	0.6	91.5	27.0	2.9	33.3	34.7
SPED	18.6	55	3.2	9.0	0.4	2.0	88.9	25.6	3.7	30.6	34.7
Low Income	75	74.3	3.2	13.2	0.1	0.8	90.6	29.5	3.2	37.0	45.7

* No self-identified Native American students reported in FY 21 data

Culturally Responsive and Culturally and Linguistic Sustaining Practices Leading Scholars

- According to **Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995)**, there are three tenets of culturally responsive teaching:

Academic Achievement	Cultural Competence	Sociopolitical Awareness
Educators hold high, transparent expectations for all students, and support the development of students' academic skills and identities as learners.	Educators understand the role of culture in education, their students' cultures, and their own identity and biases to 1) affirm students' backgrounds and identities and 2) foster their ability to understand and honor others' cultures.	Educators and students partner to identify, analyze, and work to solve systemic inequities in their communities and the world.

- According to **Geneva Gay (2002)**,

Culturally responsive teaching happens in classrooms that foster and support students' diverse backgrounds, identities, strengths, and challenges to deepen their learning, examine the systems in which they operate, and address systemic inequities.

- According to **Django Paris (2012)**,

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy actively works against monocultural and monolingual society; students' cultural and ethnic identities must be elevated to the same level as the dominant culture (white, middle class mainstream culture).

Supports students in sustaining their cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously providing access to dominant cultural competence; breaks away from one society/melting pot concept.

Defining Culturally Responsive and Culturally Linguistic Sustaining Practices (CLSP)

- **Culturally responsive teaching is synonymous with great teaching.** A teacher's practice cannot be strong, effective, or rigorous *unless* it is culturally responsive. Historically, neither the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) nor our education system as a whole have positioned culturally responsive practice as essential to great teaching...it is important to be clear that culturally responsive practice is not something educators do "on the side," but is integrally woven into the concept of great teaching.
- **All students need and deserve culturally responsive teaching.** A common misconception about culturally responsive teaching is that it is only for students who have been historically marginalized. If we are to prepare and lead students to build a more just and equitable world, all students – including students with access to systems of power - need and deserve a culturally responsive education.
- **Educators exist on a continuum of culturally responsive teaching.** Culturally responsive teaching is complex and varies based on the context and circumstances. An educator might demonstrate strength in culturally responsive teaching in some ways in a specific moment, and demonstrate areas of growth in the next. The purpose of naming and focusing on culturally responsive teaching is not to reach a specific endpoint, but to strive for consistent and authentic teaching practices that embody and promote academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical awareness.
- **Educators must do a combination of adaptive and technical work to engage in culturally responsive teaching.** In other words, educators need to build *technical* skills, such as the ability to identify and enact teacher moves that support culturally responsive teaching....At the same time, educators can only teach in culturally responsive ways if they are also doing the *adaptive* work: engaging in ongoing learning and self-reflection to confront their own biases and racism, and develop asset-based, anti-racist mindsets.

GOAL 1: Improve academics and student achievement at every school site	GOAL 2: Improve operational efficiency across the system	GOAL 3: Ensure that every school is safe and welcoming to every student and every family, every day	GOAL 4: Increase community engagement and empower families as partners in the educational process
Extended Learning Time Extend the school year and school day through expanded summer and after school programming, providing options for meaningful additional learning time for every student who is recommended for intervention and every student who requests enrichment at every school site in the District.	Data-Driven Decision-Making Establish school-level performance scorecards as part of the school-based <i>Quality Improvement Planning</i> process to monitor progress and target support for school improvement and further align school-based budgets and resource decisions with the strategic priorities and educational needs of each school.	Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices Implement phase 1 of the District's multi-year, cross disciplinary CLSP plan that was developed in SY20/21, providing year-long, focused training to school-based leaders and supporting the development of measurable CLSP goals as part of each school's <i>Quality Improvement Plan</i> . Establish a framework for a school-level DEI credentialing process to identify model schools for dissemination of best practices across the system.	Communication and Outreach to Families of Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds Increase communication and information access for linguistically diverse families through expanded use of translation and interpretation tools and services at the school level across the District, including the tracking of school use of current tools as well as expanding use of additional tools and language-based parent networks and events
Differentiated Autonomy and Support Expand and improve the district's centralized service delivery and support model for schools through a fully articulated approach that builds from the successful implementation of the <i>Renaissance Network</i> to include additional professional learning networks of schools with defined operational and programmatic autonomies based on school improvement needs.	Diversity Recruitment and Hiring Assess any remaining systemic barriers in the hiring process at schools and departments through the development of a <i>Staffing Diversity Index</i> and hiring dashboard to support all hiring managers with relevant data in the hiring process and improve system-wide monitoring and support to further ensure a fair and just hiring process for all qualified candidates for all vacant positions within LPS	Social Emotional Learning Improve the comprehensive SEL curriculum and staff professional learning launched in SY2020-2021 through implementation of a student self-assessment tool in grades 9-12, deepening the implementation of the Second Step online curriculum, and strengthening the use and expansion of Restorative Justice protocols within middle schools.	Parent Leadership Institute Design a resource and implementation plan to leverage the learnings from the two-school, 2020-2021 parent institute pilot program to establish centrally-coordinated, school-based morning, evening and weekend workshops and learning events for parents, guardians and families of LPS students at all <i>Renaissance</i> schools.
Digital Learning Align the resources and staffing of the Department of Information Technology with prevailing industry standards to improve service delivery to students, teachers and support staff and more optimally support the infusion of new hardware and software across the District through the <i>LPS Digital Learning Plan developed in SY20/21</i> .	Fair Student Funding Increase school-based fiscal autonomy through Phase 3 of FSF, including a full analysis of the 67% 'unlocked' and 33% 'locked' services within the school-based budgeting process and development of an implementation timeline for further increasing the pool of unlocked resources along with any related infrastructure and/or policy adjustments.	Capital Improvements Develop a multi-year capital improvement plan in alignment with the approved timeline of the federal <i>Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief Fund</i> to improve the condition of selected facilities across the district, including a full cost analysis and year-by-year prioritization of eligible capital projects, completing all approved projects, if any, that are scheduled for SY2021-2022 on time and on budget.	Portrait of a Graduate Implement Phase 2 of the community-based PoG initiative to operationalize the work completed in 2020-2021, including development of a standard of practice and cross-disciplinary instructional vision for all secondary classrooms in LPS which aligns with the previously-adopted, community-vetted PoG framework of the knowledge, skills and competencies to be attained by all LPS students.
Secondary School Redesign Implement the next phase of SSR with a comprehensive analysis of the current LPS high school graduation requirements, expectations of MASSCore and the current literature on post secondary readiness; and develop a policy recommendation to improve the alignment of the LPS graduation requirements with the community-based <i>Portrait of a Graduate</i> .	Enterprise Resource Planning Develop a multi-year plan for converting manual processes within human resources and payroll to a cohesive automated platform based on currently available ERP options which are consistent with both LPS and City finance systems, including cost implications and an implementation timeline which is consistent with relevant SC policies and prevailing contractual provisions.	Student Registration and Placement Conduct a full, externally-supported and validated review of the current student registration and placement process and develop a plan for streamlining services for families to accelerate the timeline from school enrollment to student placement to daily attendance.	Lowell Student Advisory Council Expand the student advisory council which was established in 2020-2021, doubling membership to further increase student voice in district-level decision-making; and implement expanded leadership training for all student members as a component of the now-established monthly LSAC meetings.

2021-22 Strategic Goals Aligned to Equity Office Initiatives

GOAL 2: Improve operational efficiency across the system

- **Diversity Recruitment and Hiring**

Assess any remaining systemic barriers in the hiring process at schools and departments through the development of a Staffing Diversity Index and hiring dashboard to support all hiring managers with relevant data in the hiring process and improve system-wide monitoring and support to further ensure a fair and just hiring process for all qualified candidates for all vacant positions within LPS

GOAL 3: Ensure that every school is safe and welcoming to every student and every family, every day

- **Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices**

Implement phase 1 of the District's multi-year, cross disciplinary CLSP plan that was developed in SY20/21, providing year-long, focused training to school-based leaders and supporting the development of measurable CLSP goals as part of each school's Quality Improvement Plan. Establish a framework for a school-level DEI credentialing process to identify model schools for dissemination of best practices across the system.

GOAL 4: Increase community engagement and empower families as partners in the educational process

- **Communication and Outreach to Families of Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds**

Increase communication and information access for linguistically diverse families through expanded use of translation and interpretation tools and services at the school level across the District, including the tracking of school use of current tools as well as expanding use of additional tools and language-based parent networks and events

- **Portrait of a Graduate**

Implement Phase 2 of the community-based PoG initiative to operationalize the work completed in 2020-2021, including development of a standard of practice and cross-disciplinary instructional vision for all secondary classrooms in LPS which aligns with the previously-adopted, community-vetted PoG framework of the knowledge, skills and competencies to be attained by all LPS students.

2021-22 Strategic Goals

District-Wide Strategic Initiative	Select Key Actions & Activities	Current Status	Next Steps
<p><i>Diversity Recruitment and Hiring</i></p> <p>Assess any remaining systemic barriers in the hiring process at schools and departments through the development of a Staffing Diversity Index and hiring dashboard to support all hiring managers with relevant data in the hiring process and improve system-wide monitoring and support to further ensure a fair and just hiring process for all qualified candidates for all vacant positions within LPS.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide easily accessible training opportunities for hiring teams around recruitment & hiring bias; • Ensure all hiring team members complete training prior to starting hiring process; • Ensure that school-based hiring team leaders have access to the Staffing Diversity Index • Set up a system for hiring team members to request training; • Establish a system to track the completion of training; • Create a database to house hiring team process documents to support desktop monitoring and review process • Create a negotiation subcommittee on educator diversity to identify ways to help LPS and the UTL diversify their workforce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video training has been developed • Staffing Diversity Index has been created and is ready for piloting • Established district team (HR; Equity; School leader, data office) to engage in recruitment & hiring analysis and improvement process; this team will represent the district administrative team on the negotiation sub-committee. • Exploring professional development management systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an assessment component for hiring team members to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key learnings from the video training. • Pilot the Staffing Diversity Index with select schools identified as having a high rate of vacancies • Institute a system and process for collecting and monitoring hiring process data and documents • Complete process with TNTP around improving data collection systems and processes around recruitment and hiring.
<p><i>Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices</i></p> <p>Implement phase 1 of the District's multi-year, cross disciplinary CLSP plan that was developed in SY20/21, providing year-long, focused training to school-based leaders and supporting the development of measurable CLSP goals as part of each school's Quality Improvement Plan. Establish a framework for a school-level DEI credentialing process to identify model schools for dissemination of best practices across the system.</p>	<p>Provide school leaders and central office leaders with adaptive and technical PD around:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) foundations of race, culture and identity, 2) tools for identifying racism, and bias in curriculum, instruction and school practices 3) provide tools for increasing student feedback as a strategy for student engagement and 4) strategy development for mitigating and eradicating racism and bias in curriculum, instructional practices and other school-based practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing initial leaders training around foundations of race, culture, identity, curriculum bias & tools and student feedback. • Working with the Hispanic Student Success Taskforce and Portrait of a Graduate teams to develop a framework for a school-level DEI credentialing program (see slide 13) • Exploring professional development management systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the curriculum in bias and student feedback training components for school leaders • After solidifying the DEI credentialing framework in collaboration with the HSST, PoG teacher and community teams and district teams, establish a series of tiered trainings to allow for staff to move along a continuum of learning • Identify a professional development management system to support the monitoring and evaluation of the credentialing system over time.

2021-22 Strategic Goals

District-Wide Strategic Initiative	Actions & Activities	Evidence of Progress	Next Steps
<p>Communication and Outreach to Families of Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds</p> <p><i>Increase communication and information access for linguistically diverse families through expanded use of translation and interpretation tools and services at the school level across the District, including the tracking of school use of current tools as well as expanding use of additional tools and language-based parent networks and events.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the data collection and analysis of the translation and interpretation resources to identify best practices and efficiencies for use of the resources. • Develop a communications matrix to guide what communications to use for different types of communications and when to use written translation or verbal interpretation for relaying different types of messages for families. • Increase two-way communication between linguistically diverse families & schools (or central office). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly data collection and analysis of usage of translation and interpretation resources disaggregated by schools and central office departments. • Development and use of communications matrix to increase consistency of multilingual communications being sent to families using multiple media of communication. • Initiated family language circles at schools to strength relationship building and information sharing between and among linguistically diverse families and schools. • Developing family liaison network to increase collective goals for communication across schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue reviewing the data and provide reports back to schools on their usage of interpretation and translation services. • Continue using and refining the communications matrix to ensure consistency and fidelity of information sharing with linguistically diverse families. • Complete the family language circle process at each school and work with school-based liaisons and family engagement designees to improve relationship-building and information sharing at the school-level. • Develop welcome orientations for newcomer families to LPS.
<p>Portrait of a Graduate</p> <p><i>Implement Phase 2 of the community-based PoG initiative to operationalize the work completed in 2020-2021, including development of a standard of practice and cross-disciplinary instructional vision for all secondary classrooms in LPS which aligns with the previously-adopted, community-vetted PoG framework of the knowledge, skills and competencies to be attained by all LPS students.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise & refine the PoG to make it more operational, which includes organizing existing language into domains, indicators, and descriptors. • Conduct a curriculum audit to determine which courses align with the proposed PoG, where gaps might exist, and to understand the student demographics of different pathways including advanced coursework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a plan of action for the remainder of the PoG grant period to accomplish the goals outlined within the grant. • Held a meeting with the PoG staff team to revisit and revise the PoG to begin making it more operational for teachers. • Planning additional staff meetings to recruit teams to lead the implementation work of the PoG. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the plan of action with a focus on solidifying the staff teams to develop the domains, indicators, descriptors and rubrics for implementation of the PoG. • Conduct the curriculum audit to inform continued planning efforts for year three of the PoG implementation process. • Align the PoG with the proposed DEI Credential Program.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Model Schools

- Lowell Public Schools is committed to launching every graduate into adulthood prepared for life. We know that a successful launch requires a diverse team of people — educators, families, and community members — working together to execute the mission: give every student the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive. The Lowell Portrait of a Graduate describes the knowledge, skills, and work habits that will prepare our students for college, careers, and civic life. (Portrait of a Graduate, Spring 2021)
- A model Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) school is a place of learning which demonstrates its commitment to: 1) fostering student-centered, welcoming learning environments that affirm cultural and linguistic identities and additionally cultivate agency in students to be social change-makers and solve inequities in their community and the world; 2) sets high expectations for all students and actively seeks to eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps in order to achieve positive academic outcomes; 3) elevates historically marginalized voices and provides access to families who are speakers of languages other than English the opportunity to fully participate in their child's education process, and 4) has a body of staff that reflects the diverse cultures, languages and identities of the students and families being served.
- The DEI Model School Credential System is an assets-based system that will enable a school, individual staff, and family to track their schools progress toward achieving the district's commitments to being welcoming and equitable learning places for all students and to guide instructional and non-instructional professional development in alignment with the strategic plan and goals.

Sample Matrix to be built out in collaboration with district and schools teams as well as community taskforces that have been established as part of the Portrait of a Graduate Process.

<u>Student Outcomes – Opportunity and Achievement Gaps</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding, identifying and eradicating disproportionalities in academics, attendance, discipline and other key school-related areas of accountability	<u>Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foundational understanding of race, culture, language, and identity• Tools and processes for addressing issues of racism and bias within curriculum, instructional practice and other school practices• Strategies for mitigating and eradicating racism and bias within the school-setting• Using student feedback loops to improve instructional practices educators
<u>Language Access</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating welcoming environments for families• Eliminating language as a barrier to family participation in school• Fostering multilingualism as an asset for English learners	<u>Staffing Diversity Recruitment, Hiring and Retention</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anti-bias training for hiring teams• Improving the hiring process for school-based teams• Exploring and utilizing strategies for retaining diverse staff and increasing staff satisfaction overall

Next Steps

1. Continue working toward the strategic goals as outlined in the presentation.
2. Propose reconsideration of the Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices Coordinator position to support the ongoing development of the Equity Office.
3. Assess and develop data management systems to support the monitoring and management of the strategic goals relating to CLSP and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives.
4. Ensure allocation of funding for staffing, training and data systems identified within these strategic goals and initiatives aligned with the Equity Office.